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Professionally and Compassionately Helping People

Distracted Driving

Kent, Wash. - July 11, 2016- One of the most common emergencies that the Kent RFA responds to is a vehicle crash. In many of these cases, distracted driving is a contributing factor.

“Distracted driving” can be defined as any action(s) that takes your hands (manual), eyes (visual), and/or mind (mental) off the primary duty of operating a vehicle.

While we think of distracted driving being the use of a hand-held cell phone or of texting, in fact eating/drinking, children, smoking, listening to music, and pets on a driver’s lap can all be forms of distractions. Even devices designed to help us drive, such as navigation systems can be manual, visual, or mental distractions.

In 2014, 3,179 people died and 431,000 were injured in vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver, nationally. 38% of those fatalities involved cell phone use.

Cell phone/texting citations carry a fine of \$124 in Washington State. The months of May - August are when most people are cited. In 2013, that was more than 16,000 tickets statewide.

Studies have shown that texting simultaneously involves manual, visual, and mental distractions and is among the worst of all driver distractions. At any given time across the country, it is estimated that 100,000 drivers are textingⁱ. The biggest danger is that texting typically takes a driver’s eyes off the road for five (5) seconds. At freeway speeds, that is driving more than the length of a football field while not looking at the road.

Be responsible, concentrate on the task of driving, and do not become a highway statistic or make someone else one.

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ⁱ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration